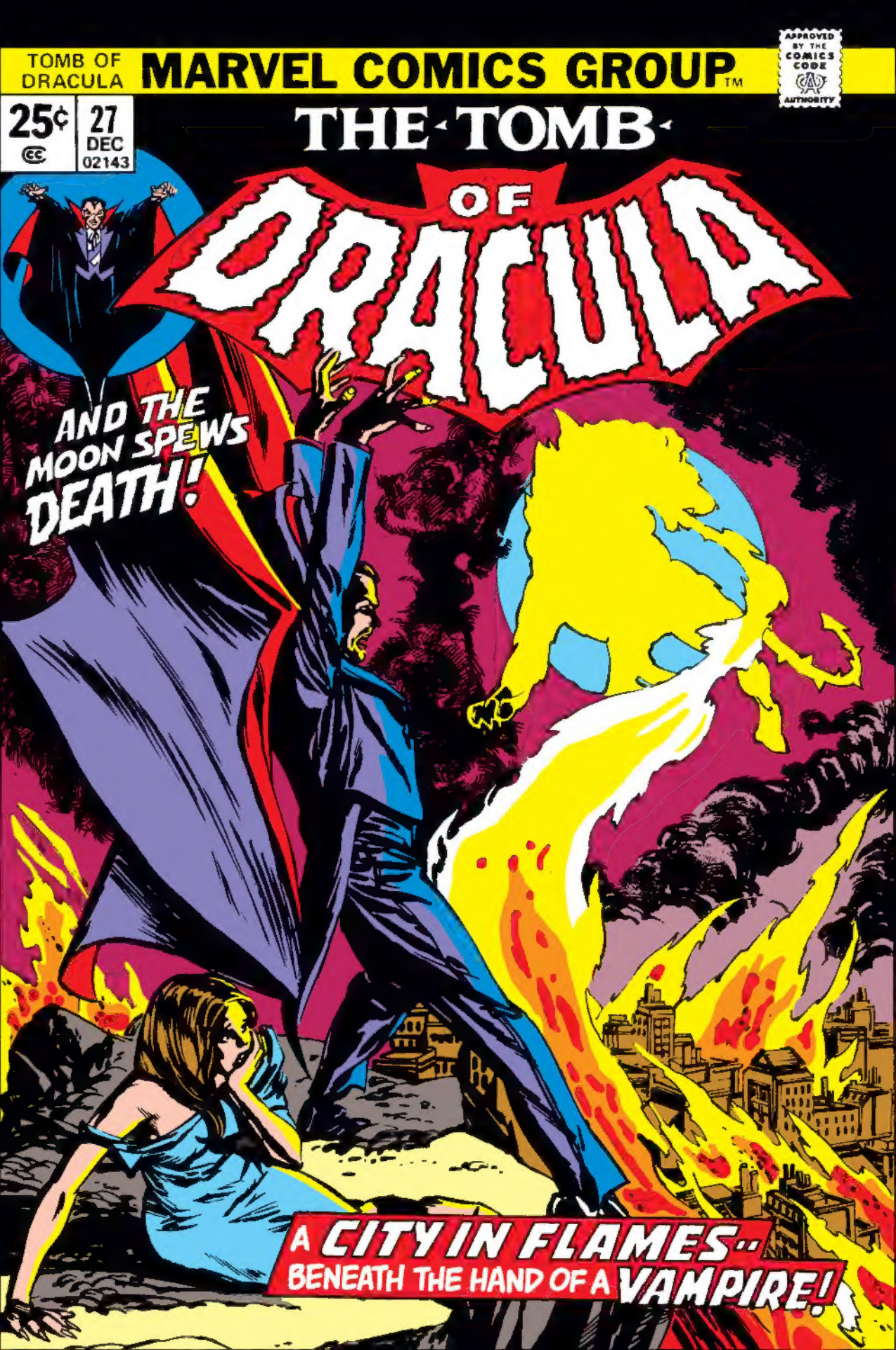
TOMB OF DRACULA
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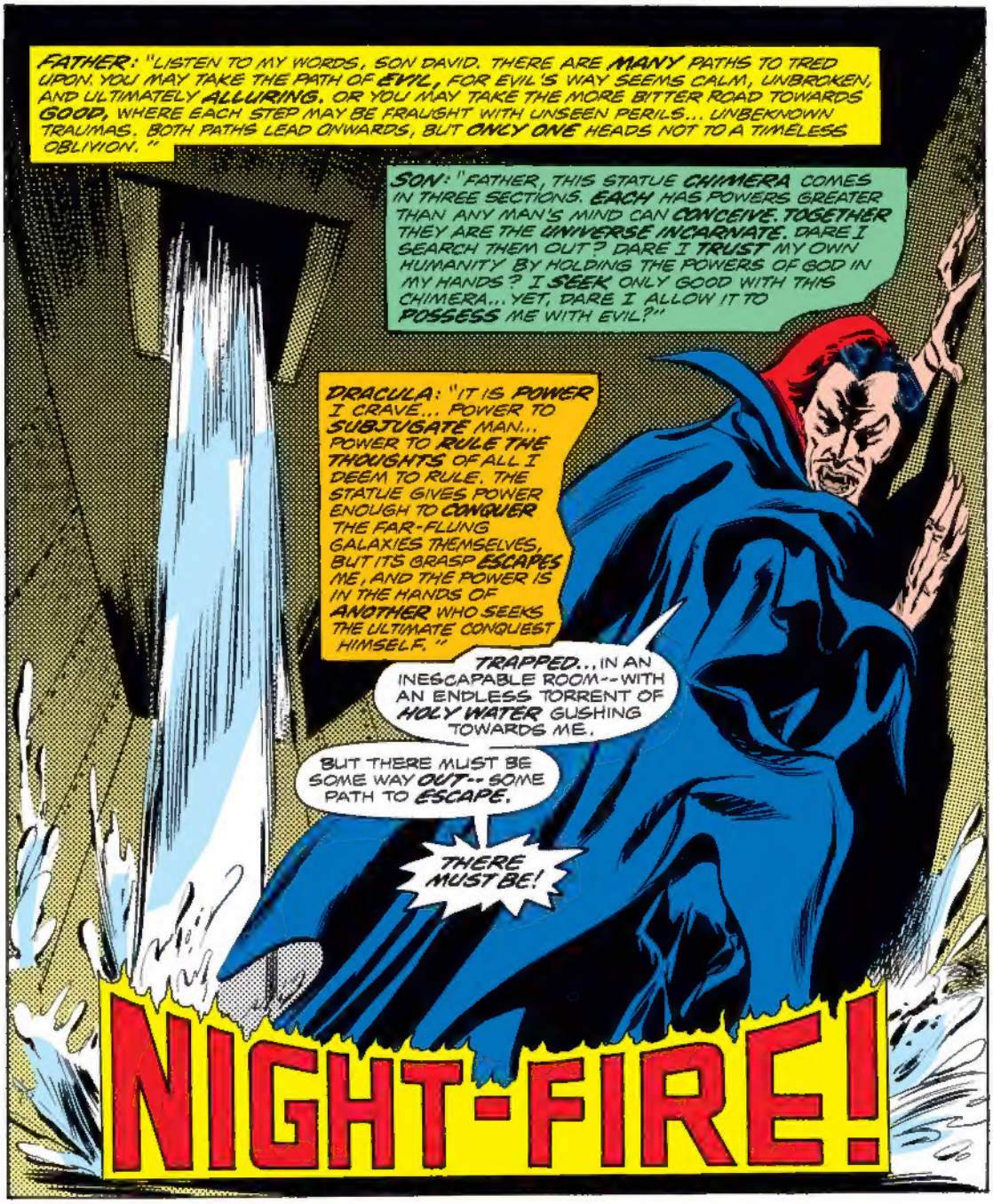
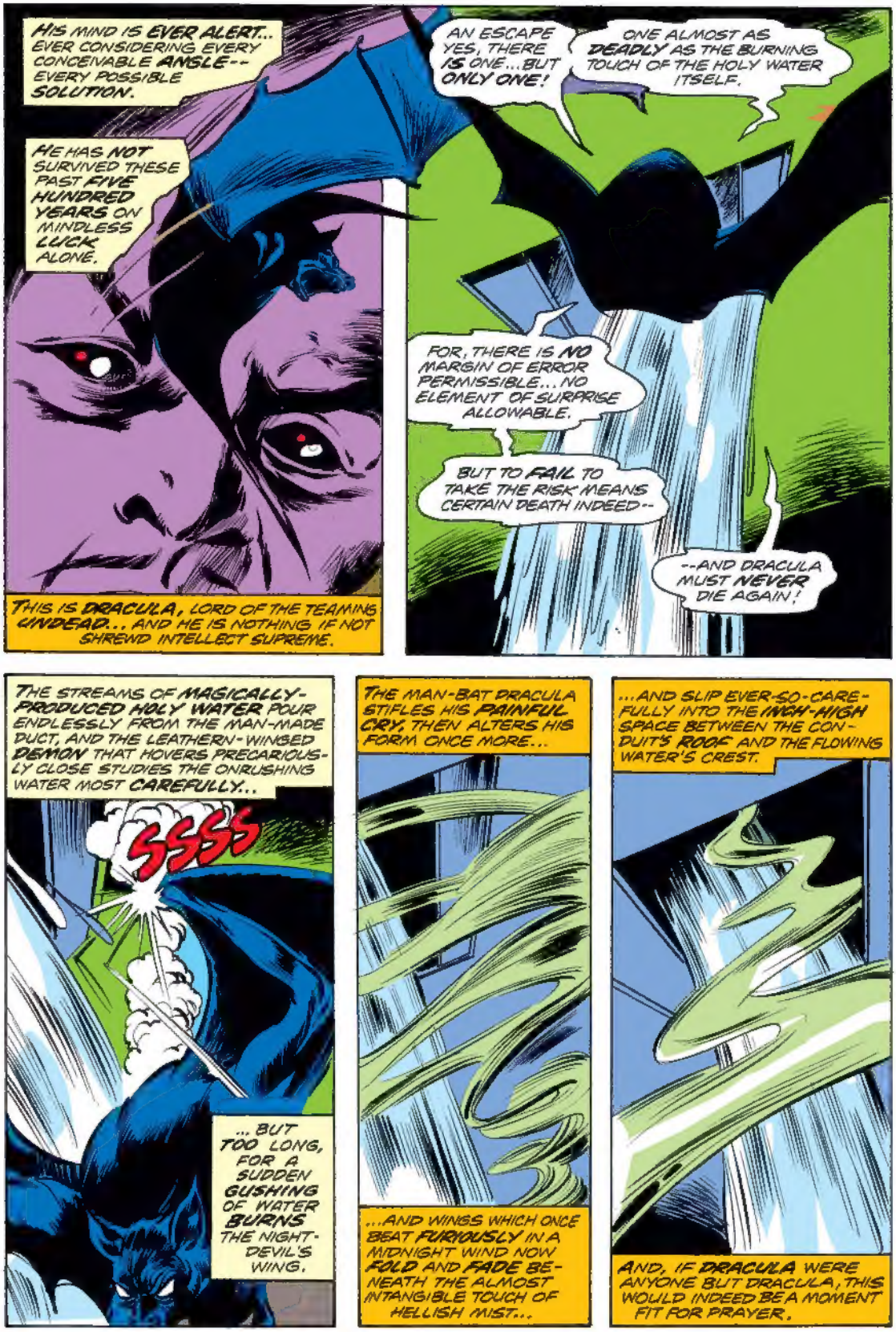
THE TOMB OF DRACULA
AND THE MOON SPEWS DEATH!
A CITY IN FLAMES.. BENEATH THE HAND OF A VAMPIRE!

Hidden in the *shadows* where legend and reality merge, there are *tales* of a being who has lived *more than five hundred years*. They say he is a creature born not on earth, but in the deepest bowels of *Hell* itself, they say he thrives upon the *blood* of innocents, that he is the king of darkness...the prince of evil and that even the *bravest* man quakes in fear at the merest mention of his name...

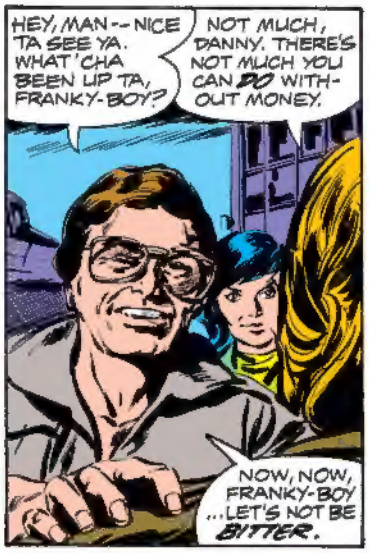
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **TOMB OF DRACULA!**

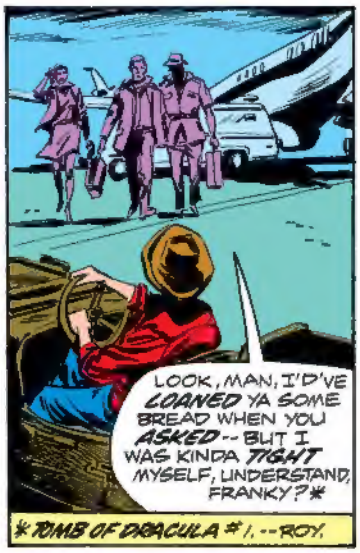
MARV WOLFMAN / WRITER | GENE COLAN & TOM PALMER / ARTISTS | JOHN COSTANZA, letterer / L. LESSMANN, colorist | ROY THOMAS / EDITOR

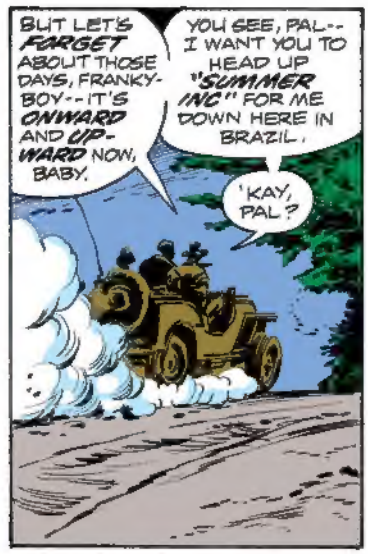

FATHER: "LISTEN TO MY WORDS, SON DAVID. THERE ARE MANY PATHS TO TRED UPON. YOU MAY TAKE THE PATH OF EVIL, FOR EVIL'S WAY SEEMS CALM, UNBROKEN, AND ULTIMATELY ALLURING. OR YOU MAY TAKE THE MORE BITTER ROAD TOWARDS GOOD, WHERE EACH STEP MAY BE FRAUGHT WITH UNSEEN PERILS... UNBEKNOWN TRAUMAS. BOTH PATHS LEAD ONWARDS, BUT ONLY ONE HEADS NOT TO A TIMELESS OBLIVION."
SON: "FATHER, THIS STATUE CHIMERA COMES IN THREE SECTIONS. EACH HAS POWERS GREATER THAN ANY MAN'S MIND CAN CONCEIVE. TOGETHER THEY ARE THE UNIVERSE INCARNATE. DARE I SEARCH THEM OUT? DARE I TRUST MY OWN HUMANITY BY HOLDING THE POWERS OF GOD IN MY HANDS? I SEEK ONLY GOOD WITH THIS CHIMERA... YET, DARE I ALLOW IT TO POSSESS ME WITH EVIL?"
DRACULA: "IT IS POWER I CRAVE... POWER TO SUBJUGATE MAN... POWER TO RULE THE THOUGHTS OF ALL I DEEM TO RULE. THE STATUE GIVES POWER ENOUGH TO CONQUER THE FAR-FLUNG GALAXIES THEMSELVES, BUT ITS GRASP ESCAPES ME, AND THE POWER IS IN THE HANDS OF ANOTHER WHO SEEKS THE ULTIMATE CONQUEST HIMSELF."
TRAPPED.., IN AN INESCAPABLE ROOM--WITH AN ENDLESS TORRENT OF HOLY WATER GUSHING TOWARDS ME.
BUT THERE MUST BE SOME WAY OUT-- SOME PATH TO ESCAPE.
THERE MUST BE!
NIGHT-FIRE!

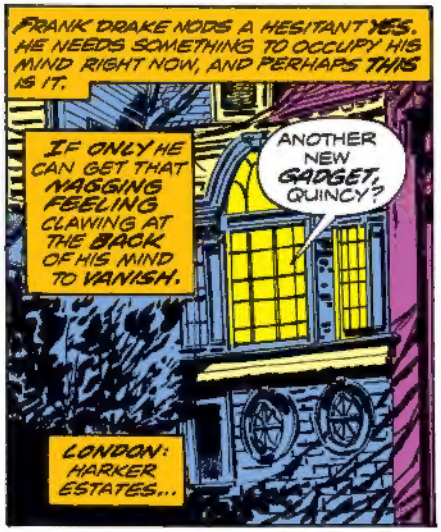

HIS MIND IS EVER ALERT... EVER CONSIDERING EVERY CONCEIVABLE ANGLE-- EVERY POSSIBLE SOLUTION.
HE HAS NOT SURVIVED THESE PAST FIVE HUNDRED YEARS ON MINDLESS LUCK ALONE.
THIS IS DRACULA, LORD OF THE TEAMING UNDEAD... AND HE IS NOTHING IF NOT SHREWD INTELLECT SUPREME.
AN ESCAPE YES, THERE IS ONE...BUT ONLY ONE!
ONE ALMOST AS DEADLY AS THE BURNING TOUCH OF THE HOLY WATER ITSELF.
FOR, THERE IS NO MARGIN OF ERROR PERMISSIBLE... NO ELEMENT OF SURPRISE ALLOWABLE.
BUT TO FAIL TO TAKE THE RISK MEANS CERTAIN DEATH INDEED--
--AND DRACULA MUST NEVER DIE AGAIN!
THE STREAMS OF MAGICALLY-PRODUCED HOLY WATER POUR ENDLESSLY FROM THE MAN-MADE DUCT, AND THE LEATHERN-WINGED DEMON THAT HOVERS PRECARIOUSLY CLOSE STUDIES THE ONRUSHING WATER MOST CAREFULLY...
SSSS
...BUT TOO LONG, FOR A SUDDEN GUSHING OF WATER BURNS THE NIGHT-DEVIL'S WING.
THE MAN-BAT DRACULA STIFLES HIS PAINFUL CRY, THEN ALTERS HIS FORM ONCE MORE...
...AND WINGS WHICH ONCE BEAT FURIOUSLY IN A MIDNIGHT WIND NOW FOLD AND FADE BENEATH THE ALMOST INTANGIBLE TOUCH OF HELLISH MIST...
...AND SLIP EVER-SO-CAREFULLY INTO THE INCH-HIGH SPACE BETWEEN THE CONDUIT'S ROOF AND THE FLOWING WATER'S CREST.
AND, IF DRACULA WERE ANYONE BUT DRACULA, THIS WOULD INDEED BE A MOMENT FIT FOR PRAYER.

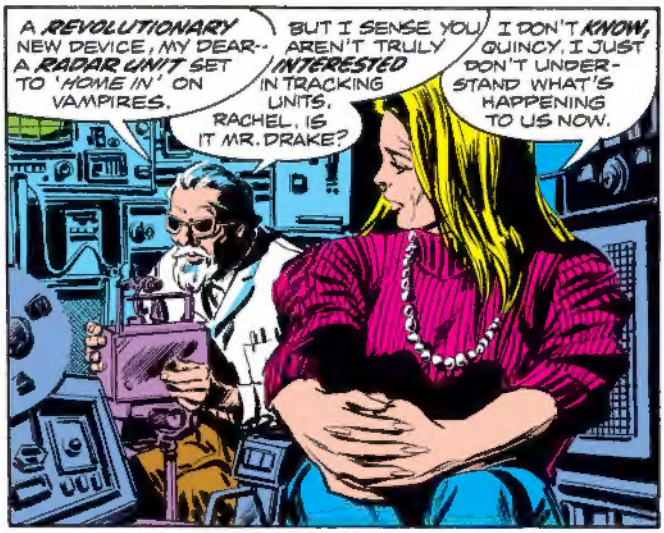
THE PATH IS TORTUOUS... AND ONE WRACKED WITH ENDLESS HELLS...
...FOR, IT IS A BYWAY NOT TO BE TRAVELLED WITHOUT PAYING A TOLL...
NO! THE PAIN... THE ACCURSED WATER FAIRLY JUMPED AT ME...
...LAUGHING AS IT SEARED AWAY MY FLESH AND BONE.
BUT I'LL NOT SUBMIT TO THE PAIN... YOU HEAR THAT? YOU HEAR THAT?
DRACULA WILL NOT CRUMBLE BEFORE YOUR POWER.
I CANNOT LET THE PAIN OVERWHELM ME... I MUST NOT!
I MUST N....
AND A TINY METALLIC UNSEEN VOICE CAN BE HEARD LAUGHING SILENTLY TO ITSELF.
BRAZIL... FAR FROM THE ENDLESS NIGHTMARES THAT FLAIL THE PRINCE OF EVIL THIS SUMMER EVE... AND YET, A LAND WHICH IS INEXPLICABLY DRAWN INTO THE TANGLED WEB DRACULA WEAVES...
THE PRIVATE PILOT SIGNALS THE EXPECTANT LANDING, AND A WISTFUL FRANK DRAKE BUCKLES HIS SEAT BELT ONCE MORE.
CHASTITY! THEN EVERYTHING'S DONE. THANK GOD.
I WAS GETTING WORRIED.
HEY, YOU FORGETTING ME, DANNY?
IN A MOMENT, FRANK-BOY--LITTLE CHASTITY JONES HERE IS FAR NICER TO GREET.


HEY, MAN -- NICE TA SEE YA. WHAT'CHA BEEN UP TA, FRANKY-BOY?
NOT MUCH, DANNY. THERE'S NOT MUCH YOU CAN DO WITHOUT MONEY.
NOW, NOW, FRANKY-BOY ...LET'S NOT BE BITTER.


LOOK, MAN, I'D'VE LOANED YA SOME BREAD WHEN YOU ASKED -- BUT I WAS KINDA TIGHT MYSELF, UNDERSTAND, FRANKY?*
*TOMB OF DRACULA #1, -- ROY.

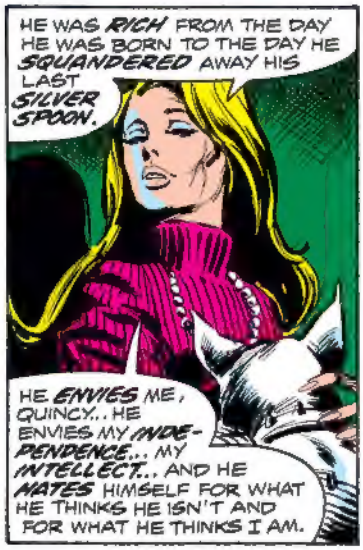

BUT LET'S FORGET ABOUT THOSE DAYS, FRANKY-BOY -- IT'S ONWARD AND UPWARD NOW, BABY.
YOU SEE, PAL -- I WANT YOU TO HEAD UP "SUMMER INC" FOR ME DOWN HERE IN BRAZIL.
'KAY, PAL?

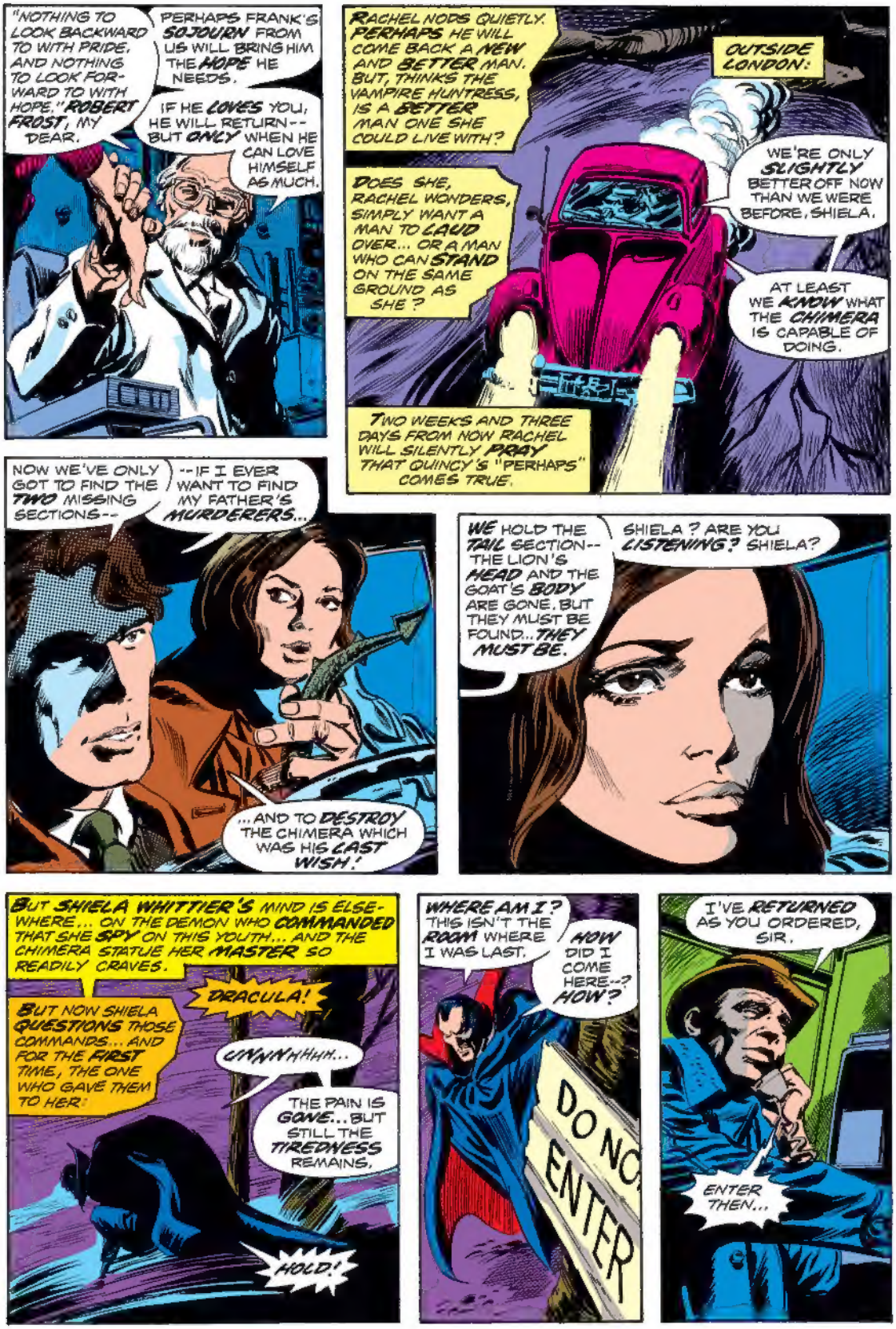

FRANK DRAKE NODS A HESITANT YES. HE NEEDS SOMETHING TO OCCUPY HIS MIND RIGHT NOW, AND PERHAPS THIS IS IT.
IF ONLY HE CAN GET THAT NAGGING FEELING CLAWING AT THE BACK OF HIS MIND TO VANISH.
ANOTHER NEW GADGET, QUINCY?
LONDON: HARKER ESTATES...

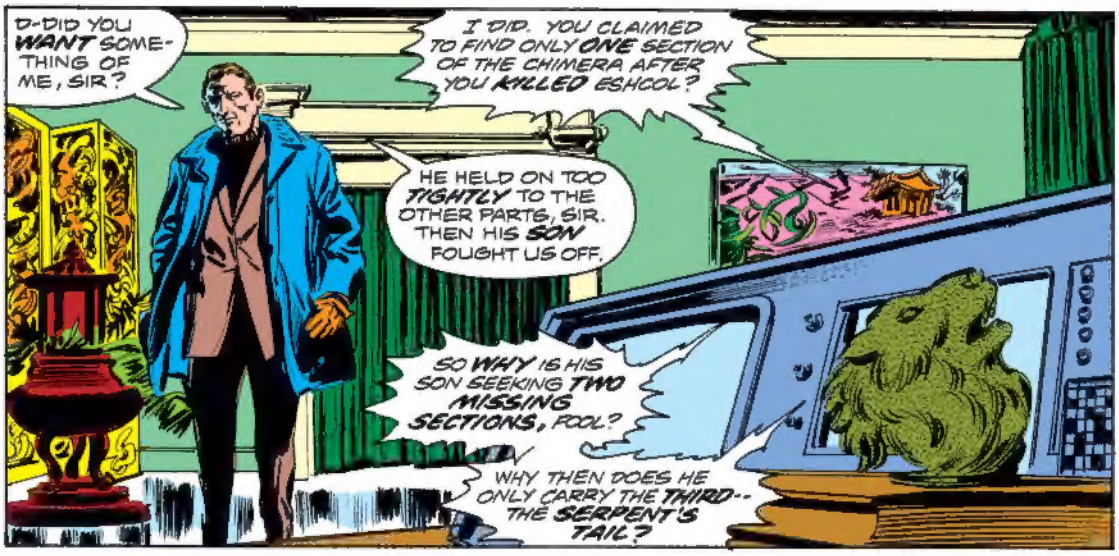

A REVOLUTIONARY NEW DEVICE, MY DEAR -- A RADAR UNIT SET TO 'HOME IN' ON VAMPIRES.
BUT I SENSE YOU AREN'T TRULY INTERESTED IN TRACKING UNITS, RACHEL, IS IT MR. DRAKE?
I DON'T KNOW, QUINCY, I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US NOW.

PARDON AN OLD MAN HIS BRASHNESS, MY DEAR -- BUT I KNOW HOW DEEPLY YOU CARE FOR OUR MR. DRAKE.
AND I'VE SEEN THE WAY HE LOOKS AT YOU... IN LOVE AND IN AWE AT THE SAME TIME.

MAYBE THAT'S THE PROBLEM, QUINCY. FRANK IS TOO BLASTED MUCH IN AWE OF ME.
FRANK'S A PROUD MAN... BUT HE'S NEVER AMOUNTED TO MUCH OF ANYTHING. HE'S NEVER HELD A JOB, HE'S NEVER TRAINED HIMSELF FOR ONE.


HE WAS RICH FROM THE DAY HE WAS BORN TO THE DAY HE SQUANDERED AWAY HIS LAST SILVER SPOON.
HE ENVIES ME, QUINCY... HE ENVIES MY INDEPENDENCE... MY INTELLECT... AND HE HATES HIMSELF FOR WHAT HE THINKS HE ISN'T AND FOR WHAT HE THINKS I AM.


"NOTHING TO LOOK BACKWARD TO WITH PRIDE, AND NOTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO WITH HOPE," ROBERT FROST, MY DEAR.
PERHAPS FRANK'S SOJOURN FROM US WILL BRING HIM THE HOPE HE NEEDS.
IF HE LOVES YOU, HE WILL RETURN-- BUT ONLY WHEN HE CAN LOVE HIMSELF AS MUCH.
RACHEL NODS QUIETLY. PERHAPS HE WILL COME BACK A NEW AND BETTER MAN. BUT, THINKS THE VAMPIRE HUNTRESS, IS A BETTER MAN ONE SHE COULD LIVE WITH?
DOES SHE, RACHEL WONDERS, SIMPLY WANT A MAN TO LAUD OVER... OR A MAN WHO CAN STAND ON THE SAME GROUND AS SHE?
OUTSIDE LONDON:
WE'RE ONLY SLIGHTLY BETTER OFF NOW THAN WE WERE BEFORE, SHIELA.
AT LEAST WE KNOW WHAT THE CHIMERA IS CAPABLE OF DOING.
TWO WEEKS AND THREE DAYS FROM NOW RACHEL WILL SILENTLY PRAY THAT QUINCY'S "PERHAPS" COMES TRUE.
NOW WE'VE ONLY GOT TO FIND THE TWO MISSING SECTIONS--
--IF I EVER WANT TO FIND MY FATHER'S MURDERERS...
...AND TO DESTROY THE CHIMERA WHICH WAS HIS LAST WISH!
WE HOLD THE TAIL SECTION-- THE LION'S HEAD AND THE GOAT'S BODY ARE GONE. BUT THEY MUST BE FOUND... THEY MUST BE.
SHIELA? ARE YOU LISTENING? SHIELA?
BUT SHIELA WHITTIER'S MIND IS ELSEWHERE... ON THE DEMON WHO COMMANDED THAT SHE SPY ON THIS YOUTH... AND THE CHIMERA STATUE HER MASTER SO READILY CRAVES.
BUT NOW SHIELA QUESTIONS THOSE COMMANDS... AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE ONE WHO GAVE THEM TO HER!
DRACULA!
UNNNHHHH...
THE PAIN IS GONE... BUT STILL THE TIREDNESS REMAINS.
HOLD!
WHERE AM I? THIS ISN'T THE ROOM WHERE I WAS LAST.
HOW DID I COME HERE--? HOW?
DO NOT ENTER
I'VE RETURNED AS YOU ORDERED, SIR.
ENTER THEN...


D-DID YOU WANT SOMETHING OF ME, SIR?
I DID. YOU CLAIMED TO FIND ONLY ONE SECTION OF THE CHIMERA AFTER YOU KILLED ESHCOL?
HE HELD ON TOO TIGHTLY TO THE OTHER PARTS, SIR. THEN HIS SON FOUGHT US OFF.
SO WHY IS HIS SON SEEKING TWO MISSING SECTIONS, FOOL?
WHY THEN DOES HE ONLY CARRY THE THIRD-- THE SERPENT'S TAIL?

THERE ARE DISCREPANCIES HERE, AND I BELIEVE YOU CAN CORRECT THEM.
BUT I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH. BELIEVE ME, SIR.
WE SHALL SEE... AS THE FLOOR SLIDES OPEN UNDER YOU.
WH-WHAT?

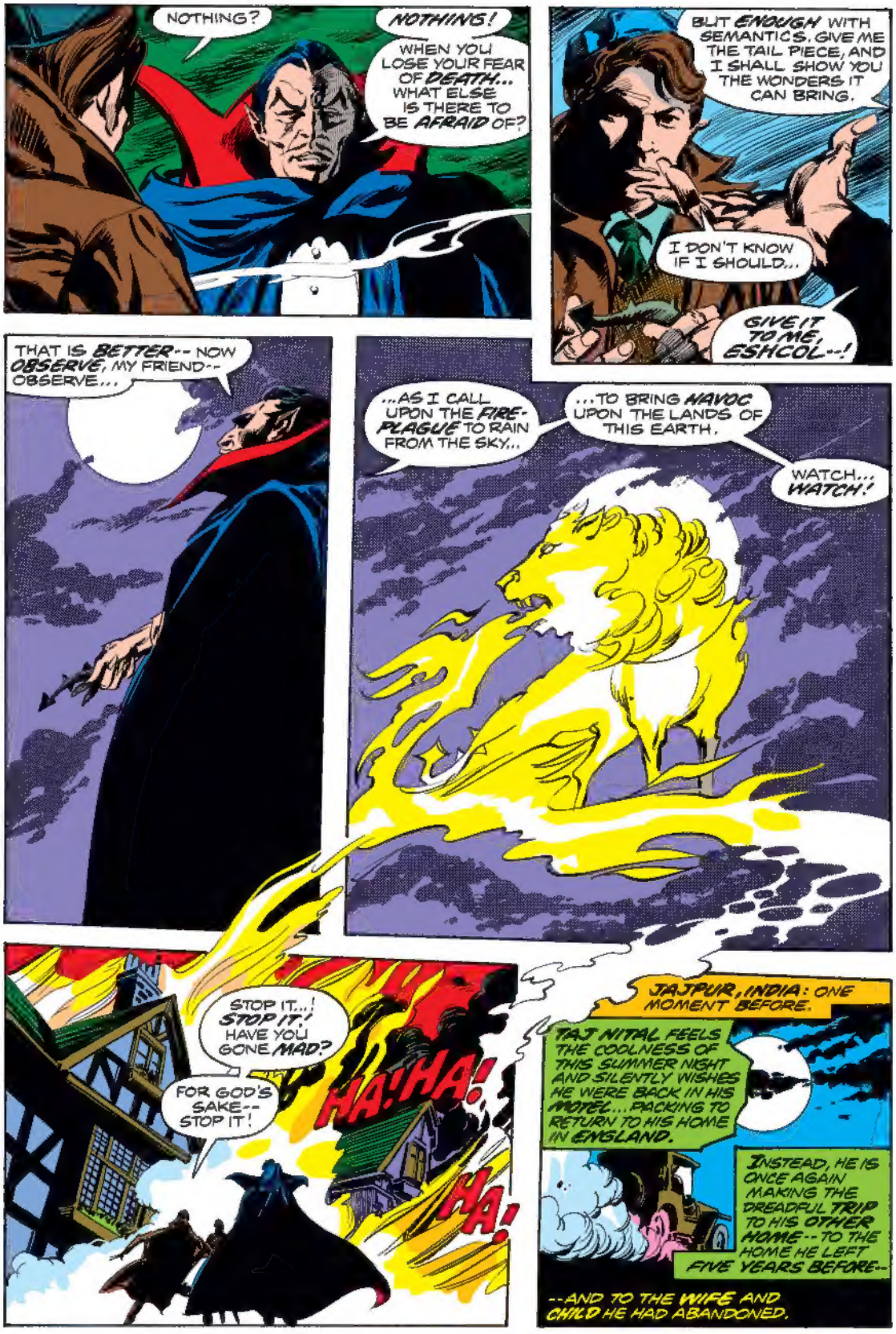
ACID, MY FRIEND, THAT IS WHAT WILL GREET YOU SHOULD THE FLOOR SLIDE OPEN UNTIL IT RETRACTS TOTALLY INTO THE WALL.
UNLESS YOU TELL ME THE TRUTH. WHERE IS THE SECOND SECTION-- THE GOAT'S BODY?

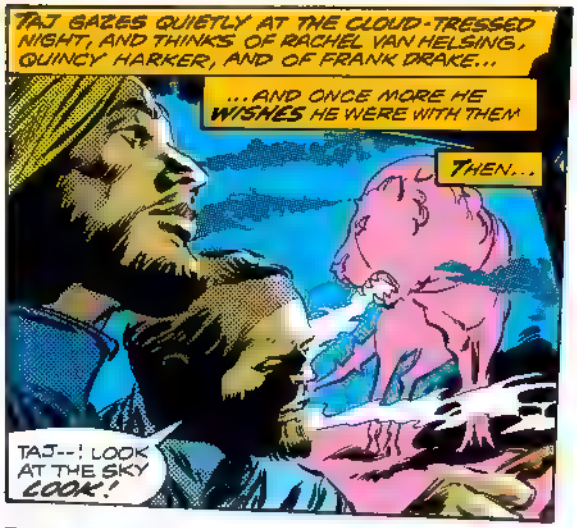
OKAY! I'LL TALK.
IT'S IN A SAFE DEPOSIT BOX-- CHELSEA BANK... NUMBER 1264.
I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH NOW. PLEASE STOP THE FLOOR FROM OPENING. PLEASE!

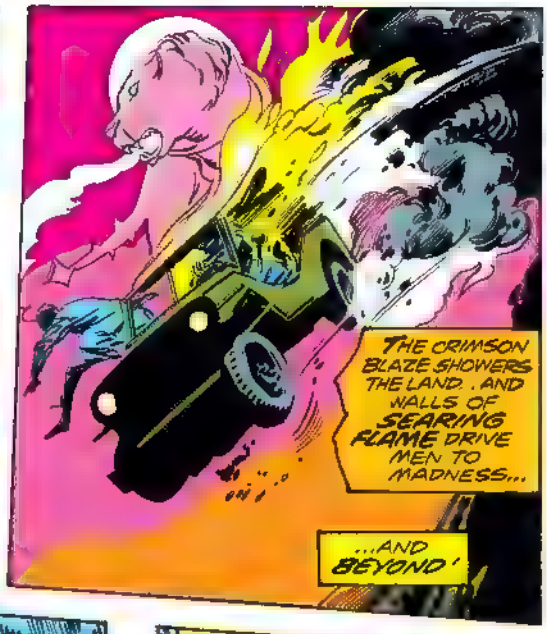
I AM SORRY, FOOL--

AIEEE!
--BUT I NEVER MAKE DEALS WITH TRAITORS.
MAE LI, I HAVE AN ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU.
WHATEVER IS YOUR WISH, MY LORD.
A SAFE DEPOSIT BOX... I WISH IT BROUGHT TO ME... TONIGHT.
THEN IT SHALL BE, MY LORD. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?
NO, MAE LI-- NOTHING MORE.
THANK YOU, MY LORD.
OUTSIDE LONDON:
TOO MUCH HAS HAPPENED TOO QUICKLY, SHIELA. FIRST MY FATHER'S DEATH-- THEN THIS SEARCH FOR A STATUE I STILL ONLY HALF BELIEVE CAN DO WHAT EVERYONE INSISTS IT CAN.
EVEN MY MEETING YOU... I'M JUST NOT USED TO THIS SPEED.
WE'VE BEEN TOLD THAT THE CHIMERA HAS POWERS BEYOND BELIEF... BUT HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE SOMETHING THAT IS IN IT-SELF UNBE-LIEVABLE?
I'VE BEEN TAUGHT TO HAVE FAITH-- BUT MIRACLES IN 1974 ARE STRETCHING THINGS FOR ME.
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO UNDER-STAND IT ALL, DAVID?
I'LL BE MODEST-- I DON'T KNOW. LOOK, I'M JUST A YESHIVA STUDENT... NOT AN OXFORD BRAIN.
I BELIEVE IN GOD AND HIS WONDERS... BUT SHOULD I BELIEVE IN A STATUE?
HOW CAN A PIECE OF CARVED STONE HAVE THE POWERS OF GOD?
IS IT REAL OR IS IT JUST SOME GOLDEN CALF?
YOUR FATHER WAS KILLED FOR IT, DAVID... AND MEN DON'T HUNT SHADOWS.
ARE YOU SO SURE, SHIELA WHITTIER? YOU WHO HAVE BEEN HUNTING FOR THE LOVE OF A MAN WHO ISN'T EVEN A MAN -- BUT AN UNLIVING DEMON FOR WHOM LOVE IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN EMOTION TO BE TOYED WITH?
SILENTLY, YOU GRASP THE SERPENT'S TAIL IN YOUR HAND, AND WISH THAT YOUR LOVER WOULD SHARE YOUR LOVE...
...AS YOU WISH HE WERE HERE WITH YOU NOW.

THE NIGHT GROWS EVEN DARKER, AND BLACKS WASH INTO A VELVETINE HELL -- THAT ABRUPTLY SHATTERS INTO LIGHT.
SHIELA! THERE'S SOMETHING... SOMEONE IN THE LIGHTS... BLOCKING THE ROAD!
IT'S HIM -- LORD, IT'S HIM --
VLAD!
SHIELA WHITTIER? THEN I'VE RETURNED TO LONDON. BUT HOW? HOW?
YOUR FACE... I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE...
YOU WERE AT MY FATHER'S SHOP -- AFTER HE DIED! I'M SURE OF IT. * WHO ARE YOU?
MISS WHITTIER'S, EH, EMPLOYER, MR. ESHCOL.
DIDN'T SHE TELL YOU SHE WAS FROM THE MUSEUM?
*LAST ISSUE. --ROY.
SHE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT MY FATHER CONTACTING THEM FOR VERIFICATION --
BUT NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
HE WANTED SECRECY CONCERNING THE CHIMERA. WHY, HE DIDN'T EVEN TELL ME ABOUT IT UNTIL THE NIGHT HE DIED.
NOW, ONE MORE TIME -- WHO ARE YOU?
I AM WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU, MR. ESHCOL. NOTHING LESS.
MY FATHER TAUGHT ME THAT "THE EYE IS NOT SATISFIED WITH SEEING."
AND IN YOUR CASE, I SENSE YOU ARE FAR MORE THAN WHAT YOU APPEAR TO BE.
YOU DEAL WITH PHILOSOPHIES, MR. ESHCOL -- I WITH REALITIES.
YOU SEARCH FOR THE CHIMERA FOR ITS POTENTIAL... I, FOR ITS POWER.
YOUR FATHER KNEW OF ITS POWER... KNEW HOW TEMPTING IT COULD BECOME -- YET, HE FAILED TO SEE BEYOND THAT --
--ALMOST AS IF HE, TOO, WERE AFRAID OF TEMPTATION.
I AM AFRAID OF NOTHING!

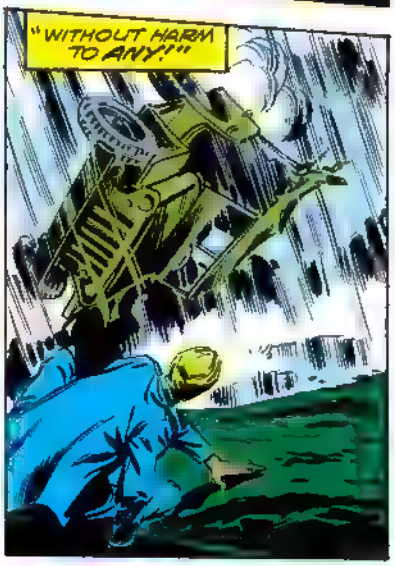

NOTHING?
NOTHING!
WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR FEAR OF DEATH... WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO BE AFRAID OF?
BUT ENOUGH WITH SEMANTICS, GIVE ME THE TAIL PIECE, AND I SHALL SHOW YOU THE WONDERS IT CAN BRING.
I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD...
GIVE IT TO ME, ESHCOL--!
THAT IS BETTER-- NOW OBSERVE, MY FRIEND-- OBSERVE...
...AS I CALL UPON THE FIRE-PLAGUE TO RAIN FROM THE SKY...
...TO BRING HAVOC UPON THE LANDS OF THIS EARTH.
WATCH... WATCH!
STOP IT...! STOP IT! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?
FOR GOD'S SAKE-- STOP IT!
HA! HA!
HA!
JAIPUR, INDIA: ONE MOMENT BEFORE.
TAJ NITAL FEELS THE COOLNESS OF THIS SUMMER NIGHT AND SILENTLY WISHES HE WERE BACK IN HIS MOTEL... PACKING TO RETURN TO HIS HOME IN ENGLAND.
INSTEAD, HE IS ONCE AGAIN MAKING THE DREADFUL TRIP TO HIS OTHER HOME-- TO THE HOME HE LEFT FIVE YEARS BEFORE--
--AND TO THE WIFE AND CHILD HE HAD ABANDONED.


TAJ GAZES QUIETLY AT THE CLOUD-TRESSED NIGHT, AND THINKS OF RACHEL VAN HELSING, QUINCY HARKER, AND OF FRANK DRAKE...
...AND ONCE MORE HE WISHES HE WERE WITH THEM
THEN...
TAJ--! LOOK AT THE SKY COOK!


THE CRIMSON BLAZE SHOWERS THE LAND. AND WALLS OF SEARING FLAME DRIVE MEN TO MADNESS...
...AND BEYOND!

CEASE YOUR RANTING, ESHCOL--I KNOW THE POWER BEHIND THIS STATUE...
INDEED, I HAVE VERSED MYSELF WELL IN IT.
NOW, OBSERVE ONCE MORE--

--AS I CALL UPON THE RAINS TO WASH AWAY ALL TRACES OF FIRE...
.. AND TO RESTORE ALL AS ONCE IT WAS.


"WITHOUT HARM TO ANY!"

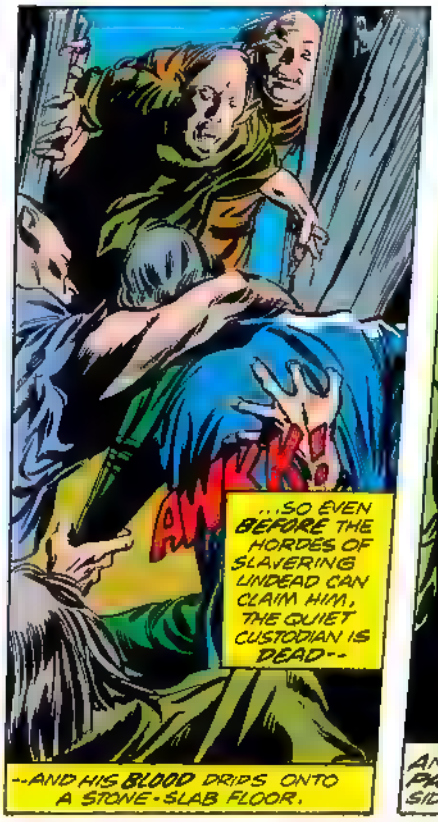
YOU SEE, ESHCOL--THE POWER THAT EVEN THIS ONE SECTION POSSESSES? IMAGINE THE STATUE COMPLETE.
MY FATHER WAS RIGHT--IT'S TOO POWERFUL FOR ANY MAN

YOUR FATHER WAS A FOOL WHO COULD NOT ACCEPT TRUE WISDOM.
BUT THAT IS NEITHER HERE NOR THERE--WE NEED TWO FURTHER SECTIONS OF THE CHIMERA

SHIELA SUGGESTED WE USE THIS PART TO FIND THE OTHERS... BUT IT DOESN'T WORK...
OF COURSE IT WOULDN'T, CLOD--

--OR WHOMEVER HOLDS THE OTHER TWO PARTS, WOULD ALREADY HAVE FOUND US.
WE NEED A VIRTUAL ARMY TO AID US IN OUR SEARCH--
--AN ARMY THAT I CAN PROVIDE
RISE FROM YOUR SOULLESS GRAVES, MY SLAVES--
--DRACULA, LORD OF THE UNDEAD, COMMANDS IT!
HIGHGATE CEMETERY..
THE EARTH, STILL DAMP FROM THE CHIMERA-CREATED RAINS, FALLS EASILY ASIDE AS GNARLED, PALSIED HANDS GROPE UP THROUGH THE GROUND.. AND SCRAPE AT THE MIDNIGHT-COLD AIR.
"I RISE AND SEEK OUT WHAT I WISH. GO-- AND FAIL NOT, OR I SHALL DESTROY YOU ALL."
INSIDE THE SMALL STUCCO COTTAGE STANDING ON THE EDGE OF THIS NIGHT-DARK CEMETERY, HORATIO TOOMBS, CUSTODIAN, SITS, OBLIVIOUS TO LIFE, AND DEATH.
DRACULA HAS SUMMONED HIS VAMPIRE LEGIONS.. AND THEY RISE TO PLEASE THEIR LORD.
SO THERE 'E WUZ, POLL-- WI' 'IS KNIGHT TAKIN' M' ROOK, O WUZ FLAMIN' MAD, O' COURSE.
BUT THREE MOVES LATER O' TOOK 'IS RUDDY QUEEN AN', 'E WUZ IN BLINKIN' TROUBLE, MATE. N' BAD, AY?
EH? SOMEONE OUT THERE, AY? 'OO IZZIT, MATE?

THE FIRST HAND SHATTERS THE GLASS, AND A BROKEN WINDOW SHARD SPLITS HORATIO TOOMBS' NECK IN HALF..


AWK!
...SO EVEN BEFORE THE HORDES OF SLAVERING UNDEAD CAN CLAIM HIM, THE QUIET CUSTODIAN IS DEAD--
--AND HIS BLOOD DRIPS ONTO A STONE-SLAB FLOOR.

HUNGRILY, ONE BLOOD-DENIED VAMPIRE TURNS ... SEEKING ANY VICTIM TO QUENCH ITS INHUMAN THIRST.
AWWK!
AND SPYING THE FRIGHTENED PARROT PERCHED TO ONE SIDE, LICKS ITS LIPS...

AND LAPS UP WHAT-EVER LITTLE BLOOD THERE IS

WHILE--
MY LEGIONS SHALL COMB THIS AREA FOR US ESHCOL..
.. FOR THIS STONE, AS YOU CALL IT, HAS MAGNIFIED MY MYSTERIOUSLY WAINING POWERS--
--TO THE POINT I CAN MAINTAIN CONTROL OF MY MINIONS EVEN AT THIS DISTANCE.
YOU LOOK BEWILDERED, ESHCOL

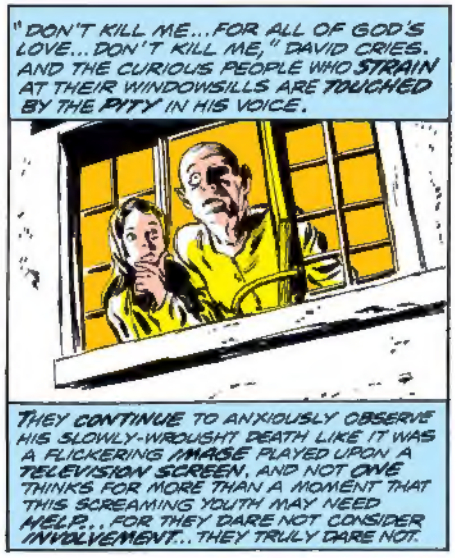
DID NOT MY TRUSTED COMPANION TELL YOU WHAT I AM?
WHAT ARE YOU..?

I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHO I AM ANYMORE
EVER SINCE MY FATHER WAS KILLED, I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN TOSSED INTO SOME MAD GAME--
--WITH TWO OTHER PLAYERS WHO KNOW THE RULES, WHILE I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN TOLD WHAT WE'RE PLAYING.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT I'VE BEEN MADE THE FOOL-- THE TOTAL FOOL.
AND I DON'T LIKE IT ONE BIT.
INDEED, ESHCOL, YOU HAVE BEEN THE FOOL--
--AS MUCH OF ONE AS ANY WHO SERVE THE KING OF DARKNESS... KING OF VAMPIRES.
VAMPIRES? BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
HARDLY IMPOSSIBLE, ESHCOL. I AM ONE... AND I AM NO MOVIE MONSTER.
I AM DRACULA, DAVID ESHCOL-- PRINCE OF EVIL... MASTER OF THE UNDEAD!
DOES MY VERY EXISTENCE REPULSE YOU? DOES THE THOUGHT OF ONE WHO MOCKS THE GOD YOU WORSHIP SICKEN YOU?
YOU HAVE SPOKEN OF EVIL... I AM EVIL INCARNATE-- THE KING OF TERRORS PERSONIFIED.
AND MORE-- I AM YOUR DELIVERER OF DEATH!
YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT, DRACULA, HE'S DONE NOTHING WRONG
HE HAS DONE EVERYTHING WRONG, MY DEAR SHIELA.
HIS VERY POSSESSION OF LIFE IS HIS CRIME.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S MAD... THERE AREN'T ANY VAMPIRES. THIS ISN'T MEDIEVAL EUROPE.
THIS IS LONDON... TWENTIETH-CENTURY ENGLAND.
THEY SAY THAT "HELL IS A CITY MUCH LIKE LONDON," ESHCOL--
ARE NOT BOTH TEEMING WITH ENDLESS INSANITIES?

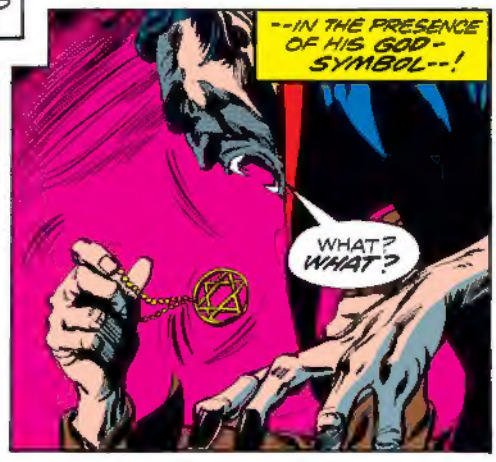
SEE, MY DEAR? YOUR 'HERO' RUNS FROM ME IN FEAR-- RUNS BECAUSE HE IS NOT YET A MAN... JUST A BROKEN YOUTH.
BUT HIS FLIGHT SHALL DO HIM LITTLE GOOD...
ALAS, THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM DEATH.
YOU MUSTN'T, VLAD, PLEASE DON'T.
PLEEEEESSSSSSS
SHIELA?!?

PERHAPS BECAUSE SHE REFUSES TO SEE THE TRUTH... THAT THE MAN SHE LOVES IS AN UNLIVING DEMON... A HATEFUL JEALOUS MONSTER, THAT SHIELA WHITTIER COLLAPSES... INTO AN INNOCENTLY MINDLESS UNCONSCIOUSNESS
DAVID ESHCOL-- YOU HAVE LIVED THIS LONG BECAUSE YOU WERE NEEDED.

BUT NOW MY ARMY OF VAMPIRES SHALL FIND THE STATUE FOR ME--
--AND YOU ARE NEEDED NO MORE!


"DON'T KILL ME... FOR ALL OF GOD'S LOVE... DON'T KILL ME," DAVID CRIES. AND THE CURIOUS PEOPLE WHO STRAIN AT THEIR WINDOWSILLS ARE TOUCHED BY THE PITY IN HIS VOICE.
THEY CONTINUE TO ANXIOUSLY OBSERVE HIS SLOWLY-WROUGHT DEATH LIKE IT WAS A FLICKERING IMAGE PLAYED UPON A TELEVISION SCREEN, AND NOT ONE THINKS FOR MORE THAN A MOMENT THAT THIS SCREAMING YOUTH MAY NEED HELP... FOR THEY DARE NOT CONSIDER INVOLVEMENT... THEY TRULY DARE NOT.

TWIN FANGS START TO BREAK FLESH AND BONE...
...AND DAVID'S TREMBLING FINGERS REACH FOR SOLACE--


--IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS GOD-SYMBOL--!
WHAT? WHAT?

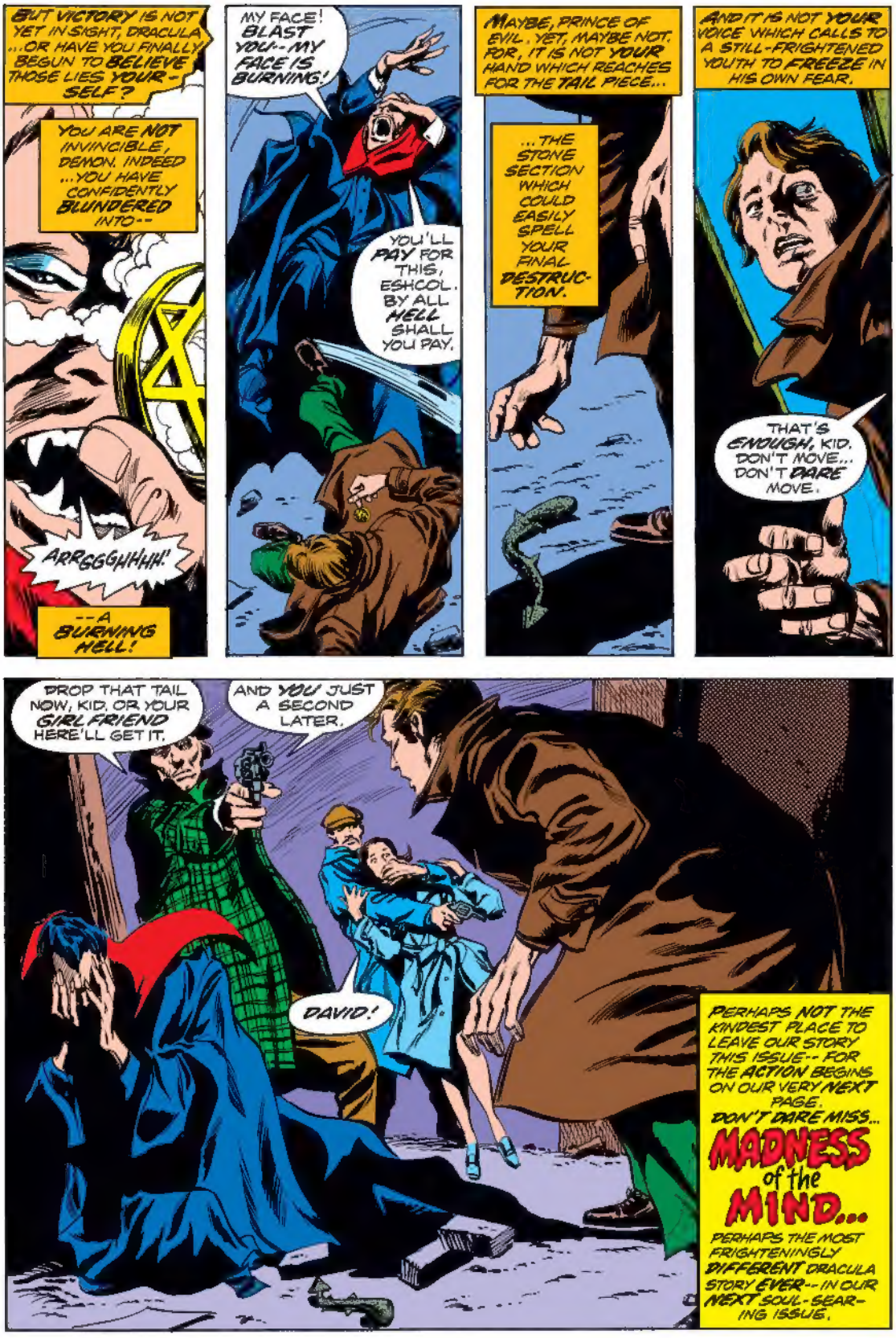
THE JEWISH STAR OF DAVID? KEEP IT AWAY FROM ME, ESHCOL.
THEN YOU FEAR IT?
I'VE SEEN MOVIES WHERE VAMPIRES RAN FROM CRUCIFIXES. I'VE READ THAT THEY HAVE THE POWER TO FRIGHTEN THE UNDEAD AWAY.
BUT I DIDN'T THINK THE JEWISH STAR WOULD WORK. I DIDN'T KNOW.
SYMBOLS OF ALL GODS REPULSE ME, ESHCOL--YOUR RIDICULOUS VERSION--AND ALL THE OTHERS.
AND THOUGH THIS STAR HASN'T NEARLY THE POWER OF THE CRUCIFIX I ONCE PRAYED TO--STILL ITS VERY PRESENCE NAUSEATES MY UNLIVING SOUL.
ABANDON THAT RELIGIOUS TOKEN, ESHCOL. DON'T YOU REALIZE YOUR GOD IS A FOOL. HE'S A LUNATIC--WHO CLAIMS HE CREATED THIS WORLD--
--OF SIN... OF EVIL... OF A THOUSAND VARIED DEBAUCHERIES.
WHAT SORT OF GOD CAN SUCH A CREATOR OF MADNESS BE?
HE CREATED US, DRACULA--BUT HE DOESN'T CONTROL OUR EVERY THOUGHT.
HE TAUGHT US... SHOWED US THE PATH OF GOOD AND OF EVIL, AND HOPED HIS TEACHING WOULD LEAD US CORRECTLY. MEN HAVE TRAVELLED BOTH PATHS--
--BUT IT HAS BEEN THE MAN WHO WAS EVIL--NOT THE GOD WHO CREATED HIM--WHO GAVE HIM HIS FREE WILL TO MAKE HIS OWN MISTAKES.
LITTLE BOY-MAN DOES NOT HAVE HIS CHOICE IN THINGS. HE FOLLOWS THE WILL OF HIS BETTERS... AND HE IS DESTROYED IF HE DOES NOT.
BE IT HIS COUNTRY OR HIS FELLOW MAN, HE FOLLOWS HIS DICTATED RULES--
NOW I MUST BE THE ONE WHO FORMS THOSE RULES... WHO ENFORCES THOSE INSTRUCTIONS.
FOR, AM I NOT YOU HUMANS' SUPERIOR?

ONCE I HAD FORGOTTEN MY DREAMS OF WORLD CONQUEST... FOR THEY WERE JUST A DREAM... AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM.
BUT NOW, WITH THIS STATUE, ALL DREAMS CAN COME TRUE.
I SEEK ONE END... AND I NEVER VARY... I NEVER WAVER.
THE WORDS ARE MAD... YET MADNESS BRINGS BACK THE WORDS OF DAVID'S FATHER... CAREFULLY TRED THE PATH OF GOOD, HE SAID. NEVER THE HELL-PAVED ROAD OF EVIL.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU FALTERED IN A DECISION? HOW MANY ERRORS HAVE YOU MADE IN YOUR LIFE, ESHCOL?
I CAN BRING ORDER! YOUR LIFE IS CON-FUSION. WHICH DO YOU WANT? WHICH?
DAVID HESITATES... THE WORDS ARE MADNESS -- HE KNOWS THAT, YET THERE IS TRUTH TO THEM... A MINUSCULE FLAVORING OF TRUTH THAT MAKES THE YOUTH PAUSE...

...JUST ONE MOMENT TOO LONG.
YOU LISTENED TO MY LIES, ESHCOL... BECAUSE THERE WAS TRUTH IN THEM.
AND THAT IS WHY YOU SHALL PERISH... THAT IS WHY ALL YOU HUMANS SHALL EVEN-TUALLY BOW BEFORE ME.
YOU ARE MERE CHILDREN... MINDLESS INFANTS THAT NEED ME TO GUIDE THEM THROUGH LIFE...
...AND BEYOND.

BUT I AM FINISHED WITH YOU NOW, ESHCOL--
--AND SO I NOW GIVE YOU THE KISS OF DEATH.


BUT VICTORY IS NOT YET IN SIGHT, DRACULA ...OR HAVE YOU FINALLY BEGUN TO BELIEVE THOSE LIES YOUR-SELF?
YOU ARE NOT INVINCIBLE, DEMON. INDEED ...YOU HAVE CONFIDENTLY BLUNDERED INTO--
ARRGGGHHHH!
--A BURNING HELL!
MY FACE! BLAST YOU--MY FACE IS BURNING!
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, ESHCOL. BY ALL HELL SHALL YOU PAY.
MAYBE, PRINCE OF EVIL. YET, MAYBE NOT. FOR, IT IS NOT YOUR HAND WHICH REACHES FOR THE TAIL PIECE...
...THE STONE SECTION WHICH COULD EASILY SPELL YOUR FINAL DESTRUCTION.
AND IT IS NOT YOUR VOICE WHICH CALLS TO A STILL-FRIGHTENED YOUTH TO FREEZE IN HIS OWN FEAR.
THAT'S ENOUGH, KID. DON'T MOVE... DON'T DARE MOVE.
DROP THAT TAIL NOW, KID, OR YOUR GIRL FRIEND HERE'LL GET IT.
AND YOU JUST A SECOND LATER.
DAVID!
PERHAPS NOT THE KINDEST PLACE TO LEAVE OUR STORY THIS ISSUE-- FOR THE ACTION BEGINS ON OUR VERY NEXT PAGE.
DON'T DARE MISS...
MADNESS of the MIND...
PERHAPS THE MOST FRIGHTENINGLY DIFFERENT DRACULA STORY EVER--IN OUR NEXT SOUL-SEARING ISSUE.